THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. 1. March 22, 1935—Adar II, 17, 5695 No. 6

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EDITORIALS

Hebrew in the Public High Schools

RECENTLY the Superintendent of the New York City schools decided to include Hebrew among the high school subjects, for which teachers' license examinations will be given this spring. We commend his action wholeheartedly. It is doubly appreciated because some of his Jewish associates opposed the move. It appears that once more Jews in high places have assumed to pass judgment on Jewish questions concerning which they have little or no knowledge, and less appreciation. Feigning "liberalism" in the eyes of their non-Jewish colleagues by soft-pedaling their Judaism, and attempting to achieve "broad-mindedness" at the expense of the survival of the cultural interests of their people, they conjured up all kinds of objections.

Some of those objections are: that to introduce Hebrew is to introduce religious instruction; that Hebrew has no utilitarian value; that it has no modern literature; that it has no unique cultural values; that it has no text books or qualified teachers; that it is unAmerican, in its effect; that it will affect the English pronunciation of pupils; that there are already too many languages and subjects taught in the high schools. One Jewish objector even suggested that since the depression closed many of the Hebrew schools, the Jews wanted to unload their children on the public high schools.

That progress has been made despite these objections is due in a measure to the fact that a sufficient number of students were found, in the high schools, who would risk taking the subject without credits. The zeal and interest of these students and their teachers served to overcome many an obstacle and win over many a sceptic; and before long, we are confident, all thinking people will agree with the progressive educator that Hebrew is entitled to a place in the curriculum of the American high school as a matter of right and educational necessity.

The progressive educator recognizes that the school is designed for the pupil and not the pupil for the school. He is interested in the pupil's total program of education and not only in his public school hours. He is concerned about his social, economic, and cultural background and about his environmental influences. In the case of the Jewish child the progressive educator finds Hebrew a cultural asset, not an educational burden, for it helps this child to better self-knowledge, to greater self-respect, and therefore to greater self-reliance. To integrate Hebrew into this pupil's high

school program is to help toward the development of an integrated personality—hence a greater asset to himself and to the community at large.

American Jewish educators have spoken frequently of the problem of adjustment to the American environment. The public school's control of the major time of the child and his environmental influences has forced upon the American Jewish parent an almost one sided adjustment. He could reduce the Jewish schooling of his child to the vanishing point of the Sunday school, or confine him to the insulating atmosphere of the parochial school. In adapting himself to the environment, the American Jew adopted much and sacrificed more. To what extent, on the other hand, has he attempted to influence his environment? A highly advanced biological organism does adjust its surroundings to its own functional existence. Jews speak often of their cultural and spiritual contribution to America. What are they really giving to America? They are *giving up* their own, abandoning it. Their neighbors remain ignorant of the history and literature of the Jews, whose self-ignorance is becoming notorious. The process of adjustment should be understood as the mutual interaction of forces, and so understood, the introduction of Hebrew in the public schools is a wholesome step in the right direction. We earnestly hope that other cities, where Jews reside in large numbers, will soon follow the example set by New York City.

General Johnson and the Menace of Fascism

GENERAL JOHNSON has rendered a public service in calling attention to the dangerous fascist tendencies behind the movements that rally about popular orators and social nostrum-vendors like Huey Long and Father Coughlin. The interests that benefit most by the preservation of the status quo find the oratory of demagogues who promise the millenium a convenient means of weakening the government in its effort at social control of business. Big industrialists are not frightened by the radical speeches of demagogues because they know well that their radicalism is only a form of rhetoric. They are aware that they can easily prevail upon such leaders, by the bait of their support, to abandon all the radical planks of their platform and to divert the attention of their followers from the realities by "red herrings" of one sort or another.

But the problem lies not so much in the men that lead such movements as in the conditions that make people look to such men for leadership. To center public attention on these personalities instead of on the conditions may be another way of diverting attention from the real issues. If such is the effect of General Johnson's attacks on these men, he will himself be aiding the sinister designs of profit-seeking interests that would welcome a fascist regime.

The condition which is so much tinder to the flaming oratory of demagogues is indicated by the fact that there are 22,350,000 persons on the relief roll of the nation, approximately one-fifth of the population. The significance of this fact must not escape us. It is important not merely as revealing the wide-spread destitution which prevails but also as showing a radical change in the philosophy of government to which the administration has committed the country. The old *laissez-faire* conception of government has received its *coup de grace* at the hands of the Roosevelt administration. Nobody today contends that that government is best which governs least. The administration has given currency by its acts if not by its words to the idea that the government owes its citizens a living.

We applaud the President for this stand, but that stand is a dangerous one unless its implications are faced.

In all economic depressions of the past, business recovery was facilitated by ruthless deflation of credit through foreclosures and bankruptcies as well as by cheapening the cost of production through increased hours of labor and the reduction of wages below subsistence levels. Such means cannot be used today. The misery is too widespread and the radical critique of capitalism too well publicized for the hungry masses to submit to starvation as part of the "normal process of the business cycle". Government must guarantee economic security to every citizen. Can it do so without at the same time running the business of the country? Big business will certainly resist government "interference". It will counter by interfering with government, by trying to use the government to "keep labor in its place", to conquer foreign markets, and to divert the masses from attention to their own suffering by appeals to "patriotism," the religious opiate which has proved most efficacious in modern times. This is fascism and evidences of a trend in this direction have not been lacking in places to which General Johnson turns a blind eye.

The government has assumed responsibility for assuring that there shall be no "forgotten man" in the distribution of the goods essential to decent living. If this objective can be obtained and industry still yield a profit to the investor, our government can feel that, in bringing about such a condition, it has fulfilled its mandate from the people. But if it must choose between profits to the investor and the securing of an adequate supply and distribution of the goods needed to feed, clothe and shelter every one of its people, it must resolutely choose the latter even though the choice may involve the scrapping of the whole profit system. To choose otherwise would be to betray its pledge to "the forgotten man" and to turn over the nation to a fascist regime such as would make of the citizen a mere pawn of a class-controlled state and cannon-fodder for the benefit of profiteers.

Religious Conflict in Palestine

THE recent disturbances in Tel Aviv centering about the violation of the Sabbath are deplorable for the violence which accompanied them. But while we deplore the use of sticks and stones on the streets of Palestine to emphasize the sanctity of the Sabbath, the larger issue should not escape us, namely, what is to be the fate of Jewish religion in Palestine?

The basic issue behind the overt manifestations of violence is the clash between traditionalism and modernism, a conflict which is inevitable in the process of modernizing the nation. This conflict is not new in Jewish life, for the challenge of modernism reaches back to the social and intellectual developments of the last century and a half. But it has not been resolved by diaspora Jewry in all these years, because Jews have interpreted the problem to be not one of modernism versus traditionalism, but between the survival of Judaism and its extinction. Those who resist the modernization of Jewish religion in the diaspora see in it the danger of complete assimilation; they see in the dominant environment no sources for the creation of new ritual practices. So that even those who wish to see Jewish religion modernized hesitate to proceed, fearing that the elimination of traditional practices might lead only to the attrition of Jewish life. Reformation, they feel, may be necessary, but the only new values they may incorporate will be those which they adopt in imitation of the non-Jews.

In Palestine, however, those who feel the need of a modernized Jewish religion are not afraid that their ritual changes may lead to the loss of Jewish identity. The land, the language, the

Sabbaths and festivals, the study of Bible are all factors palpable enough to insure the preservation of the Jewish personality. Ritual reformation can therefore be undertaken with confidence, and indeed, the results already achieved are extremely encouraging. Dr. Levinthal, in the *Brooklyn Jewish Center Review* for February, writing on "What of Religion in Palestine?", describes vividly the wholesome evolution of Jewish folk religion in Palestine, and concludes that "religion, properly understood . . . is a living fact in Eretz Yisrael". The Oneg Shabbat and Purim, in Tel Aviv, Shabuot in Haifa, are only a few instances of the way new Palestine is creating a folk religion on the foundations of the past. Here the modernization of Jewish religion emerges out of an inner necessity in an atmosphere conducive to new folk religious forms, "alive, associated with life, inspiring to life".

The disturbances in Tel Aviv must therefore be interpreted as the birth pangs of that modern Jewish folk religion which, ultimately, will serve to inspire diaspora Jewry.

A Quarter Century of Educational Leadership

THE Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America has completed, this year, twenty-five years of significant activity. The influence which that institution has exerted over American Jewish life has been far reaching, and there is every reason to believe that it will continue to stand out as one of the most vital instruments for the reconstruction of Jewish life in this country.

A quarter century ago, American Jewish life had to import its leaders and teachers. Since that time, the Institute has made Jewish education self-sustaining as the Seminary itself made Jewish religious life self-sustaining. Besides raising a generation of Jewishly educated laity, the Institute raised the status of Jewish teaching to that of a profession, with high scholastic and technical standards. As a result, the ghetto *cheder* has been replaced by the modern school, with a curriculum related to the needs of life. Unfortunately, community responsibility has not kept apace with the growth of the new Jewish education. This has added to the difficulties which the Institute has had to face, in addition to those created by the depression.

Despite these difficulties, however, a loyal and gifted faculty have carried on with courage, and their efforts have yielded results of first rate importance. The leaders of outstanding Jewish educational agencies in many cities are graduates of the Institute. Communal responsibility for education has been introduced by them in many communities, textbooks have been written, methods have been modernized. But the Institute has not confined itself merely to the development of professional educators. It realized that well trained teachers could not function in a vacuum, that the demand for good Jewish education could arise only out of the environment of an active Jewish life. An informed and appreciative Jewish laity had to be cultivated.

To this end, the Institute supplemented its work with the Seminary College of Jewish Studies and the Israel Friedlander Classes. The former department is authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees to young college men and women who, after ten years of preliminary study, pursue a four year Hebraic course. The latter offers a more elementary course of three years to that vast element of Jewish youth and adults who have not had the privilege of that preliminary training. Both these departments fill a profound need for *Torah li-sh'mah*, for the kind of Jewish education which serves to render their students intelligent and responsible members of the Jewish people.

As we record these notable achievements of the Institute, we must acknowledge a great indebtedness to the Bureau of Jewish Education, under the leadership of Dr. Samson Benderly, for its cooperation in this vital work. The Bureau not only raised the standards of Jewish education, but, by establishing communal responsibility for Jewish education in its community, created the demand for qualified teachers, and furthered effectively the purposes of the Teachers Institute. Next year, the Bureau celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary.

Institutions like these give promise of a future for Jewish life in America, and their continued success should be the concern of every Jew.

"Undermining" Biblical Criticism

LAST Saturday's newspapers carried exciting stories of important archeological discoveries in Palestine. Porcelain potsherds were uncovered, bearing inscriptions which, at first glance, seem to corroborate the narratives contained in the Book of Kings. The headline writer in one of the papers blithely announced that these discoveries might prove that Higher Criticism has been undermined. This must certainly have been good *shabbos* news for the fundamentalists.

We do not want to mar the joy of the traditionalists, but we must point out that, firstly, the inscriptions have not yet been carefully read; that, secondly, all indications are that they refer to names and events recorded in that portion of the Bible which has been regarded as most dependable, and which have never been the target of revolutionary criticism, and thirdly, that even if the discoveries turned out to be inscriptions reading verbatim, like sections of the Pentateuch, the historicity of the events recorded would not in the slightest be proved. The fact that a very early record of the miracle of the Red Sea corresponds, philologically and stylistically, to the *humash* as we know it, does not add any credibility to the story itself.

The traditionalists obviously confuse the scientific discovery of what actually happened with the scientific discovery of what people believed to have happened. A fundamental axiom of science which they ignore, apparently, states that one science cannot contradict another. Certainly an archeological discovery, recording the stopping of the sun by Joshua, cannot be regarded as a "scientific" proof that the sun really stopped —if such a phenomenon conflicts with the laws of physics and astronomy.

It should be understood, therefore, by the adherents of traditionalism that neither the recent discoveries nor any others can "undermine" biblical criticism, for the basic conclusions of the critical attitude are not founded upon the lack of literary parallels corroborating the Bible, but upon the careful reading of the texts, unprejudiced by preconceived notions. The conclusions arrived at by a scientific study of the Bible are based upon the testimony of the scriptures themselves. But the most important thing to realize is that if we desire to make the Bible again part of the intellectual and spiritual world of the modern Jew we must concern ourselves not with how much of it we wish Jews to believe to be historically authentic, but rather how great an interest we can revive among Jews in the Bible, how we can succeed in getting Jews to study it. We are confident that if our people studied the Bible as great literature, as history, as poetry, as the record of the religious strivings of our ancestors enough would emerge to widen the spiritual horizon and reawaken the cultural life of Jews.

The Background of Jewish-Arabic Relations

By SAMUEL ROSENBLATT*

(*In anticipation of our next issue, which will be devoted to the celebration of Maimonides' eight hundredth anniversary, we publish the following essay describing the impacts of Jewish and Arabic civilization upon each other, of which Maimonides' work was so notable an example.*—EDITORS)

IT is not of purely academic interest at the present time for Jews to seek to discover what relationship there exists between Judaism and the religion and civilization founded by Mohammed. If the present trend in the shifting of the Jewish scene continues—and there is every likelihood that it will—a great many Jews, perhaps the majority of the Jewish race, will in days to come again be settled in lands among the natives of which the faith of the prophet of Arabia predominates. It would be a great step in the direction of breaking down the walls of prejudice that the fear of the stranger often erects between persons of diverse origin if the adherents of the two great monotheistic religions, the sacred languages of which are Semitic, if the adherents of these two religions whom destiny is once more bringing into close touch with one another would try to understand each other by studying one another's creeds and cultures and noting what they have in common.

I

All things considered there should not be much difficulty in building up favorable sentiment among the Mohammedan population towards the Jews who are coming to live in their midst despite the fact that in such places as Palestine Jews and Moslems are in a sense competitors. That deep cleavage that once existed—and to a great extent still exists—between the seed of Abraham and the Christian world owing to the belief on the part of the latter that the ancestors of the former caused the death of the saviour of Christendom, that cleavage has no place in Jewish-Mohammedan relations because no claim of such nature has ever been made by Mohammedans against Jews. Whatever crimes the followers of the law of Moses may have been held guilty of by the professors of Islam, they were never charged with having killed Mohammed, and that is a tremendous advantage, a most important point in the Jews' favor. It is responsible for the comparative tolerance displayed by the Moslem majority towards the Jewish minority, and especially by Moslem rulers towards their Jewish subjects, in ages when religious bigotry was the order of the day. Not that there were wanting occasional outbursts of fanaticism that made the lot of the Jew living under the crescent intolerable, such as the eruption of the Almohades in Spain which compelled the family of Moses Maimonides to leave their native country. There was, however, never anything in the Mohammedan persecution of Jews that could equal the grim fierceness of the massacres executed upon their Jewish neighbors by the warriors of the cross or the terrors of the Inquisition instituted by the Catholic rulers of Spain. There was never among Mohammedans that keen animosity and bitter hatred of the Jew that characterized the Christian masses during the Middle Ages, because there were no Passion Plays, no lurid tales of

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cruelty on the part of the Jews against the founder of their religion to stir up the Moslem populace.

It is true that the Jews of Medinah, the Arabian city in which the prophet of Islam found refuge after the Hijrah, i. e., his forced flight from his native Mecca in the year 622 C. E. which, by the way, marks the beginning of the Mohammedan era, it is true that the Jews of Medinah refused to recognize Mohammed's prophetic mission, that in fact they taunted and teased him and that he could never forgive them their hostility and their obstinate refusal to join him, and that when he became powerful enough he exterminated one of their tribes and banished the other. Yet for all that the Jews remained, even for Mohammed, the Ahl al Kitab, the people of the book, to whom God had once revealed himself, and who as monotheists, i. e., believers in Allah, were not to be classed with the pagans whom Moslems were bidden either to convert or to put to the sword. As a people of the book Jews were subject only to the payment of a tribute "dimmah" to the Mohammedan government but were otherwise not to be molested in the exercise of their religion. That was the ruling laid down by the second founder of Islam, the creator of the Mohammedan empire, the Caliph Omar, when he conquered Syria and Egypt a few years after Mohammed's death; and it was generally adhered to by his successors.

At all events, whatever his personal grievances against his Jewish neighbors in Medinah may have been, the originator of the Mohammedan faith felt pretty close to them as well as to their religion. Jews and Arabs had, in his belief, a common ancestor in Abraham, the former tracing their descent from the patriarch through his younger son Isaac, the latter being related to him through his older son Ishmael. Jews and Arabs were therefore kinsmen, cousins who had grown up in different countries. The religion that Mohammed brought to his Arab countrymen was not supposed by him to have been an innovation but simply a restoration of the pure creed of Abraham of which Mohammed considered himself to be the last apostle, succeeding Moses and Jesus of Nazareth, both of whom he accepted as prophets along with the other heroes of Jewish and Christian scriptures.

II

The Koran, the Mohammedan Bible, which was entirely the product of Mohammed's brain, takes for granted the Old and the New Testament, although it often diverges from them in its historical data and in certain matters of law. But these deviations are not due to any conscious desire on the part of Mohammed to create something new but chiefly to the fact that the Arabian prophet was not acquainted with the originals of the Jewish and Christian scriptures but received whatever knowledge he had of them by word of mouth, as is evident from the fact that, with but a few doubtful exceptions, he never quotes the Bible verbatim. Then, too, his Jewish and Christian tutors seem not to have been scholars of the highest calibre. As a result the details of biblical history often became confused in Mohammed's mind producing the strangest combinations and the most glaring anachronisms so that he made Haman, the villain of the Book of Esther, a minister of the Pharaoh of the Exodus who lived at least 1,000 years before him, and the ordeal of his army by drinking from the stream which the Hebrew scriptures attribute to Gideon was ascribed by him to King Saul. When confronted with these contradictions by the Jews of Medinah who remembered their Bible sufficiently to notice them, Mohammed's defense was that he had the correct version and that the Jews had falsified the original text.

As for his departures in matters of law and ritual, other considerations besides these had a part in them, the foremost being the exigencies of Arab life

and the force of tradition. It was, for example, out of the question to prohibit to the bedouins the eating of camels' flesh, which was their staple food, or to forbid work on the Sabbath in a country in which the struggle for existence was as fierce as it was in Arabia. Of the Mosaic dietary laws Mohammed retained, therefore, only those pertaining to the prohibition of eating swine's flesh, blood and carrion, whilst for the repose on the seventh day of the week he substituted the assembly at the mosques for prayer on Fridays. He justified these changes by the declaration that the numerous restrictions that had been imposed upon the Jews were merely a punishment for misbehavior, and that Allah had really never forbidden these things to his faithful. As for the biblical statement that God had rested on the seventh day after he had completed the work of creation, which was conceived by him to have been the chief source for the Jewish institution of the Sabbath, Mohammed stated that that passage had been misconstrued by them, for there can be no fatigue or lassitude for the all-powerful. To what extent Mohammed had to yield to the customs of his Arab milieu can be seen from the fact that the direction in prayer *kiblah*, which, in conformity with Jewish practice he had at first fixed to be toward Jerusalem, was later transferred by him to Mecca, the ancient holy city of the Arabs, and that he retained as one of the duties of every God-fearing Mohammedan the pilgrimage to the black-stone of the Kaaba, the venerable shrine of Mecca, an institution that had existed since time immemorial during the Jahiliyab, the period of Arab heathendom. This pagan rite was given the sanction of the new monotheistic faith through the assertion that the Kaaba had been founded by Abraham, whom the Hebrew scriptures picture as a builder of altars.

The religion brought forth by the camel-driver of Mecca represents, then, no complete divorce from the religious practices that were current among his countrymen up to the time when Islam arrived on the scene. In fact, no religious system entirely replaced its predecessor. Every new faith that is born is a syncretism incorporating certain elements that were part and parcel of the creed that came before it. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that the Mohammedan religion, which today counts among its adherents 200,000,000 souls spread all over the world and represented by all the races of man, should betray the influences of the erstwhile creed of the land of its origin. What seems remarkable is rather the fact that in spite of the limitations of his environment and his personal shortcomings, Mohammed should have progressed as far as he did, and have produced a religion possessing real spiritual grandeur and worthy of being classed among the three great monotheistic faiths in the world.

As was intimated before, Judaism and Christianity are taken for granted by Islam. Mohammed pretends to incorporate them both into his system which is ostensibly nothing more than a continuation of its two forerunners. This assertion neither Jews nor Christians will accept, and objective criticism sustains them in their objection. Mohammedanism is not identical with either Judaism or Christianity. This much however is true: that it is dependent on them and possesses features in common with both of its monotheistic predecessors. Of the two, however, it reveals greater similarities with Judaism than with Christianity. With Judaism Mohammedanism affirms the belief in one God without modifications or embellishments. The Koran is quite emphatic on this point. Polemizing against the Christian doctrine of the trinity it states: "God is one; the self-existent. He begets not and is not begotten and there is none like to Him." The Mosaic dietary laws which Christianity rejected altogether were, as we have seen before, retained by Mohammed in part. The five daily services which are supposed by some to

have been copied from the Parsee system also have their analogy in the five services of the Jewish Day of Atonement. The rite of circumcision, too, is prevalent among the Mohammedans although it does not possess in Mohammedanism the binding character which it has in Judaism. The fast of the month of Ramadan seems to bear greater resemblance to the Catholic Lent than to any Jewish institution. Yet it should be recalled that originally the main fast day of the followers of Mohammed was Ashurah, the tenth of the month of Muharram, which corresponds exactly to the Jewish Day of Atonement which occurs on *Asor,* the 10th of Tishri.

When we examine the language of the Koran we discover a great many expressions and technical terms that were taken over bodily from the religious usage of the Jews and are either Hebrew, the language of the Scriptures, or Aramaic, the vernacular of the Jews of Asia in which the Talmuds were written. Examples of such words that are clearly of non-Arab origin are:

Sakinah = Heb. Shekinah (the divine presence)
Malakut = Heb. Malkut *i.e.* Malkut Shamayim (the heavenly kingdom)
Salat = Aramaic Silota (prayer)
Zakat = Aramaic Z'kuta (purity, alms)
Jannat Adan = Heb. Gan Eden (garden of Eden)
Jahannama = Heb. Gehinnom (hell)

Furthermore we find in the Koran, as has been shown by several scholars beginning with Abraham Geiger who 102 years ago wrote his epoch-making essay entitled *"Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?"* ("What did Mohammed adopt from Judaism?"), we find in the Koran a wealth of *Agada,* i. e., legends and tales found in the Talmud and the Midrash and other works of Jewish tradition. In fact, the account the Koran gives of Biblical characters is rarely the unadorned story found in the scriptural text but usually the highly colored portraiture of rabbinic literature. It knows, for example, of Abraham's breaking of his father Terah's idols. It implies a familiarity on the part of its author with the *Agadic* statement that Joseph was restrained from yielding to the seductions of Potiphar's wife by the apparition of the image of his father Jacob. Such instances can be multiplied by the hundreds. They indicate the extent of the indebtedness of the Mohammedan religion, in its earliest stages at least, to the particularistic teachings of Judaism, aside from the practices and beliefs to which it subscribes that are common to both Judaism and Christianity, such as the giving of charity, the omniscience, the omnipotence and the providence of God, the day of judgment, and heaven and hell which are pictured very vividly in the Koran and to which reference is made repeatedly,

That Mohammed borrowed directly from Judaism, and that he had Jewish teachers from whom he received detailed instruction in their religion, is now established beyond the shadow of a doubt. The prophet of Islam protests too vehemently against the charge of passing on information obtained from non-Arabic teachers and he follows too slavishly the assertions of the *Agada* to be taken at his word when he declares that he has received all his revelations entirely from God. Whether such dependence on Judaism, such direct Jewish influence can be adduced for the later development of the Mohammedan religion, is not so certain. Every instance of correspondence is not necessarily a proof of borrowing. There is always the possibility of a common source for the Jewish and the Mohammedan tradition or law in question, or else the parallelism may be due to the fact that the human mind follows certain definite lines of reasoning. Surely if one can discover points of contact between the jurisprudence of the Jews and that of the non-Semitic Romans it should not seem strange that similarities should exist between Mohammedan and Jewish law. And yet sometimes

the resemblances are so striking that it is impossible to explain them except on the assumption of interdependence. When, for example, we learn that the Mohammedan law of slaughtering animals calls for the severance of the wind and the food pipe, and it appears most probable that this law, which is found in the Talmud, has taken centuries to crystallize, and when we are told, furthermore, that before performing the act the Mohammedan slaughterer is required to mention the name of Allah just as it is incumbent upon the Jewish *shochet* to pronounce a benediction as he is about to carry out the *shechita*, we feel pretty sure that the Mohammedan law has been modeled after the Jewish law. And such cases are legion.

III

It would take us too far afield to trace even in outline the complete story of the development of Mohammedan law and theology, rich though this evolution is in parallels to what took place in Judaism. A few points however must be noted by anyone who wishes to obtain at least an elementary comprehension of our subject. To put it briefly, then, let us state that the principal duties of a Mohammedan are summarized in the following five prescriptions laid down in a tradition attributed to the prophet:

1. The *shahadah*, the declaration that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammed is his prophet (which is part of every service).
2. *Salat*, the five daily prayers.
3. *Zakat*, the giving of alms.
4. *Saum*, the fast of the month of Ramadan. (Of course it is impossible for any human being to fast an entire month. What is meant, rather, is that during this month Mohammedans fast during the day but feast at night.)
5. The *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca which every devout Moslem must endeavor to undertake at least once during his lifetime.

These constitute but a very fractional portion of the rules for the guidance of the life of a Moslem that have accumulated since the days of Mohammed, about which tomes upon tomes have been written and which define not only the right belief but regulate every movement of man from the use of a toothpick at the table to the manner in which he must proceed in acquiring a wife. A certain modern Christian scholar who wrote on Mohammedan jurisprudence found it rather perplexing that what is apparently only religious law should be so comprehensive and all embracing. Evidently he has never seen our Jewish *Shulchan Arukh*, for if he had his amazement could not have been so great. In fact, if he were to compare certain sections of the table of contents of the Jewish code, in English translation, with that of a Mohammedan digest he would not be able to tell them apart. So great is the resemblance. Let us try it out by taking at random two codes, one Mohammedan and one Jewish.

Code A

Book Two. Of Prayer.

1. The time of prayer.
2. Upon whom prayer is incumbent.
3. On what occasions.
4. The antecedent requirements of prayer.
5. The eighteen essential parts of prayer.
6. The four things in which the prayer of a woman differs from that of a man.
7. The eleven things which nullify prayer.
8. A reckoning of the occurrences of certain frequently repeated elements in prayer.
9. On omissions in prayer.
10. The five occasions on which prayer is not allowable.
11. The duty and ritual of congregational prayer.
12. The prayer of a traveller.
13. The conditions under which congregational prayer is required.
17. Prayer for rain.

Code B

89. The laws of prayer and its times.
90. Where it is proper to pray with the congregation and the prayer of a traveller.
91. That one must gird one's loins and covers one's head at prayer.

92. The law of washing and other preparations for prayer.
93-98 Various requirements of prayer.
99. That he who is intoxicated may not pray.
106. Who is absolved from prayer.
108. He who has omitted to pray by mistake or for other reasons.
221. Benedictions of thanksgiving and for rain.

The first of these two lists is an analysis of the contents of book two of the "Taqrib" of Abu Shuja al Ispahani, a Mohammedan theologian, the second is an excerpt from the table of contents of the *Orach Chaim,* the first part of our own *Shulchan Arukh.* I defy anyone to distinguish between them in this rendering.

To come now to the evolution of Mohammedanism, we may say that in general it proceeded along lines similar to those of Judaism. Like the Jews, Mohammedans have their written law, their Torah *shebik'tab,* which the Koran comprises and alongside with it an oral tradition, Sunna, corresponding to the Torah *sheb'al peh* of the Jews, complementing and supplementing the written law. Like the Jewish oral law this Sunna was for a long time not committed to writing but transmitted by word of mouth from teacher to pupil. The Hadith, the body of traditional literature which contains this oral law, exists in several different rescensions just as did the various collections of the Mishnah until Rabbi Judah ha-Nassi made his authoritative compilation. It is very much like the Agadic section of the Talmud containing the table talk and the usages of the prophet and of his companions, answers to various questions of law, anecdotes, legends and interpretations of the Koran. As the law developed, variations in ritual arose similar to the differences between the Ashkenazic and Sephardic rites of the Jews. Four such traditional rituals, all regarded as Orthodox (the Shafiite, the Hanifite, the Hanbalite, and the Malikite) have maintained themselves until this day. As in Judaism, furthermore, acts are divided by Mohammedan law into

1. *wajib, i.e.,* obligatory (corresponding to Jewish *chobah*)
2. *mandub, i.e.,* recommended (corresponding of Jewish *mitzvah*)
3. *ja'iz, i.e.,* optional (corresponding to Jewish *r'shut*)
4. *makruh, i.e.,* reprehensible but not punishable (corresponding to Jewish *patur abal asur*)
5. *haram, i.e.,* culpable, forbidden (corresponding to Jewish *chayyab*)

Finally, Mohammedanism produced its mystics who claimed to be in possession of a sort of Kabalah or secretly transmitted lore, its parallel to the Zaddik-worship of the Chassidim in the apotheosis of the Imam, the religious leader of the age who must be a lineal descendant from the prophet, and in a belief corresponding to the Jewish belief in the Messiah, in the form of the hope for the reappearance of the Mahdi, the absent leader who is to usher in a reign of justice.

IV

We have observed thus far in what way Mohammedanism was influenced by Judaism, the channels being at first the Jewish informants of Mohammed and later on no doubt the Jewish scholars with whom the Mohammedan legislators in Iraq and Syria must have had frequent contact. There are records to show that the relations between the Caliphs at Bagdad and the Jewish exilarchs, who were occasionally also the spiritual heads of Jewry and who lived in the vicinity, were quite intimate. For a while, then, Jews were the teachers and Mohammedans their pupils. In the course of time, however, the roles were changed and the erstwhile pupils began to teach their teachers. The conquest of Persia brought the Arabs in contact with the Syrian priests who had opened schools there and preserved in Syriac translation the philosophy and the science of the ancient Greeks, after the fanatical Byzantine emperors had closed the academies of learning in their domains. These works culture-loving Caliphs like Harun al Rashid,

of Arabian Nights fame, caused to be rendered into Arabic, and thus brought about a renaissance in the cultivation of, science and the allied disciplines. The Jews, who for centuries had confined themselves to the study of the Talmud and traditional lore and had for sundry reasons not ventured outside of the four ells of the Halakhah, soon followed suit. In imitation of their Mohammedan neighbors they began to investigate the grammar of their own Hebrew language the technical terms for which were coined from Arabic prototypes. Their poets wrote love-lyrics, the imagery and ideology of which were identical with that of their Arabic counterparts; they even used Arabic meter. One of them, the celebrated Judah ha-Levi, protested, indeed, against this prostitution of the holy tongue by subjecting it to the rhythm of the language of the son of the slave. Yet he himself sinned against his own preachments.

Most of all, however, can the influence of the Arab masters upon the Jews be detected in the matter of secular science and philosophy. The Arabs preceded the Jews as writers on these subjects and practically all the books composed by the latter on them in lands of Mohammedan religion and Arabic speech were written in the Arabic tongue. Even so outstanding a Jewish thinker as Moses Maimonides, whom not only Jews but also his Mohammedan contemporaries recognized as a great savant, betrays his dependence on Arabic matters. He quotes constantly from the Arabic commentators of Aristotle, Alfarabi and Avicenna. His "Guide to the Perplexed," his chief philosophical work, was written in the Arabic vernacular and all his learning in the scientific field is derived from Arabic sources and ultimately Mohammedan teachers. He worked out his own conciliation between Judaism and Aristotle, to be sure. His scientific views, however, were entirely those of his Arabic environment. The deep impression made upon their Jewish contemporaries by the Mohammedan mystics, the Sufis, has been amply demonstrated by Professor Yahuda in his introduction to Bachyah ibn Pakuda's "The Duties of the Hearts," in which the editor points out the numerous references by this popular Jewish ethical writer to Sufic literature.

V

The Jews had taught the Arabs religion and law. The Arabs in turn instructed them in science and philosophy, repaying them measure for measure, and then again a change took place. Towards the middle of the 12th century religious fanaticism put an end to the spirit of free inquiry among the Mohammedans which had found a haven of refuge in Andalusia, southern Spain. Just as it happened at the eastern end of the Mediterranean 600 years previously, so now at its western extremity the schools of philosophy were closed and Mohammedan culture began its downward path. When this happened, when philosophers were thrown into prison and their works were burnt, the Jewish pupils of the Arabs did their masters the act of grace of preserving those fruits of their intellectual activity that had been proscribed, by translating their works into Hebrew. Many of the treatises of Averroes and other Mohammedan savants of the Middle Ages have come down to us only in the Hebrew rescension made of them by the Tibbonides, the Kimhides, the Kaspis, the Narbonis and other Jewish scholars who took up in Provence, southern France, the thread of scientific speculation dropped in Spain.

The greatest blow to Mohammedan civilization, however, a blow from which it has not yet been able to recover, was dealt to it by the Mongolians who in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries overran the greater part of the

territory conquered by the Arabs pillaging, plundering and burning, massacring the population, ransacking palaces and destroying libraries. So complete was the destruction wrought by these ruthless invaders that since that time Islam has not produced one original creation of outstanding merit, not one great historian, litterateur, philosopher or poet. The days of Islam's glory are in the past. The finest relics of Mohammedan architecture, such as the Alhambra of Granada, the mosque of the Sultan Hassan in Cairo and the mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, date from the time before the end of Mongolian rule. So do also the greatest works of Arabic literature. But although the artists and philosophers and poets and jurists of Islam are gone, the religion lives on. It has large groups of followers as far east as the Philippines and China and as far west as Morocco, in the lost villages of the Sahara, and the upper reaches of the Himalayah mountains in India, not to speak of Persia, Arabia, Syria, the whole of North Africa, Turkey and the Balkan Peninsula. Islam is still making new conquests.

Among the Occidental students of Islamic literature and institutions and their interpreters to the western world the proportion of Jews has been exceedingly great. The researches of Goldziher, Horowitz, Hirschfeld, Munk, Derenbourg, Margoliouth, Vambery, Yahuda and others have contributed enormously to the understanding and knowledge of Mohammedan civilization and culture and are indications of the feeling of kinship that still exists among Jews with the Arabs and of the former's recollection of their whilom association with the latter. Of this genuine desire on the part of Jews for a rapprochement with the Mohammedan Arabic speaking world the scientific labors of the Oriental seminary established a decade ago at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem are eloquent evidence. Dr. Judah L. Magnes, the chancellor of this unique Jewish institution, takes great pride in the accomplishments of this branch of the only Hebrew academy of learning in the world, because he considers it one of the most effective means for winning the confidence of the Palestinian Jews' Arab neighbors. If the Mohammedan can be convinced that the Jew has no intentions of robbing him of his spiritual heritage, there is hope that he, in his turn, will respect the Jew's political and cultural claim to the little strip of earth which became the holy land of three religions because Jews once inhabited it and taught in it the belief in the one God, revered alike by Moslem and Jew.

BOOK REVIEW

A Full Length Portrait of Palestine

JEWS IN PALESTINE, A. Revusky; Vanguard Press, New York, 1935.

MR. REVUSKY'S purpose in writing this book "was to satisfy the long felt need of a standard book about modern Palestine, which, while offering the fullest and most impartial information about the material aspects of that land's unusual development, should also reflect the more intimate human warmth connected with the great experiment". In that purpose, the author has succeeded admirably, for this reviewer has never read a more comprehensive, more accurately documented and more intelligently formulated description of the rebuilding of Palestine. With authoritative command of the facts, and with that objectivity so often lacking in Jewish writers about Eretz Yisrael, Mr. Re-

vusky has written a volume which must excite the enthusiasm of even the most indifferent reader without arousing in him the suspicion that he (the author) has any propagandistic designs upon the reader.

Although this book was published in the first days of this year, the material covers the period through the end of 1933, including only estimated figures for 1934. Obviously, some of the material is already out of date. For example, Jewish Palestine is described as an "economically healthy and sound community, with a normal distribution of its members among the various occupations. In this fact, lies . . . the fundamental difference between Palestine and *Galuth* where Jews are traditionally concentrated in a limited number of urban occupations". During the last year, however, the danger of overpopulating the cities has become a real one. We are constantly reading about agricultural workers hastening to Tel Aviv and Haifa, abandoning the colonies for more lucrative employment at building. The problems of diverting more of the new immigrants away from the cities has developed since Mr. Revusky completed his manuscript. In a number of other instances, the amazing pace of Palestine's growth has rendered the factual description incorrect: the total property of the Jewish National Fund has increased by at least 30,000 dumans since the writing of the book, and the Rothchild-Hadassah-University hospital and medical center has been projected since that time.

But these discrepancies are more than counterbalanced by the fine analysis of the Jewish-Arab problem, the lucid and fair presentation of the various political parties, the intelligent emphasis upon the cooperatives and the labor movement. In the political field, Mr. Revusky believes that the first of these, "the problem of Jewish-Arab relations overshadows all others", and he comes to the conclusion that "the Jews ought to give more attention to the study of the Arab language and strive for closer economic and social contacts with the Arab population of the country. The author's insistence on the necessity for a close rapprochment between Jews and Arabs must not be construed as an indication that Jewish leaders in Palestine are not conscious of the importance of the Arab problem and do not desire some kind of reconciliation. . . . Nevertheless, there is a lack of an authoritative Jewish leadership working systematically and courageously toward this goal, undaunted by the probability of opposition from Revisionists, and other extreme elements, that still exercise a chauvinistic influence on important sections of the Palestinian Jewish population". Apparently, this keen observer regards the question of the Arabs even more vital than the stabilization of the present economic boom or even the question of the eventual termination of the mandate.

Jews who are concerned with the future of Palestine should give much consideration to Mr. Revusky's counsel. His scholarship and sincerity merit that consideration.

IRA EISENSTEIN.